



# THE COMPTROLLER'S CORNER

## Space

Dedicating this issue of our magazine to Space properly recognizes its importance to the Air Force and to us as financial managers. Space represents an opportunity and a challenge for the Air Force. It is an opportunity because of its growing importance in military operations. The key role played by space assets in last year's war in Kosovo—a point noted by General Eberhart in his letter in this issue—underscores that importance. Space is also a challenge because we must integrate it into our operations rather than treat it as a unique. The Air Force now uses the term aerospace operations to emphasize the importance of this integration.

Space assets and operations do not consume a large fraction of today's Air Force budget. Even defined broadly, the costs of space amount to about 8 percent of total Air Force budget authority in our FY00 budget. But that fraction is likely to grow as we move toward greater reliance on space systems for communications, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and other military operations. As noted in the articles in this issue, there are also some unique funding issues associated with space that make it a challenge for financial managers.

I urge you to read these articles to become more familiar with space, including its operations and funding. You will be learning about an aspect of the Air Force that is both fascinating and of growing importance.

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